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**PSC TO HOLD HEARING FEBRUARY 28 ON
NORTHWESTERN ENERGY'S 2005 ANNUAL GAS TRACKER CASE**

The state Public Service Commission will hold a hearing Tuesday, February 28, in Helena concerning NorthWestern Energy's 2005 gas cost tracker filing. NorthWestern files an annual gas tracker case in order to adjust rates to reflect the costs the utility actually paid for gas during the tracker year.

The hearing will begin at 1:30 p.m. in the PSC's Bollinger Room, 1701 Prospect Avenue.

In its filing, which was initially submitted in May 2005, NorthWestern proposed a 12-percent gas rate increase, primarily due to increased market prices for gas. Last August NorthWestern revised the filing to propose a 27-percent rate increase, citing updated cost information. Under this proposal, the bill for a typical residential customer using 10 dekatherms of gas per month would increase about \$25 per month. On August 30, the PSC approved the proposed rate increase on a temporary basis until a final decision is issued.

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